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AUTHOR Altamura, Marilyn T.
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ABSTRACT

This practicum project exposed seven preschool students with language deficiencies to multicultural experiences and strategies, resulting in improvements in both language and thinking skills. The children were included in a regular preschool program serving low-income families. The program was based on a multicultural awareness curriculum which utilized such teaching strategies as role playing, parental involvement, storytelling, puppet play, cooking, show and tell, and arts and crafts. Language enhancement activities included group size variations, field trips, microphone and tape recorder use, interactive communications, story drawing, picture and story captioning, multicultural literature, and use of big books as part of whole language activities. Vocabulary was introduced through concrete objects, stories, books, games, songs, and activities. This practicum report presents numerous ideas for multicultural learning activities, using the culture of a different geographic area as the theme of each week's activities; areas include Ireland, Africa, Haiti, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Italy, and the United States. A bibliography of 37 items and a discography of 13 items are included. Appendices provide a home language survey, teacher observation checklist, multicultural questionnaire, parent letter, and language and critical thinking skills pre/post-tests. (Contains 14 references.) (JDD)

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ED 378 735

A MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS PROGRAM TO IMPROVE LANGUAGE AND THINKING SKILLS TO A GROUP OF LANGUAGE DEFICIENT PRESCHOOL STUDENTS

by

Marilyn T. Altamura

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A Practicum Report
submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science.

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference.

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Abstract

A Multicultural Awareness Program to Improve Language and Thinking Skills to a Group of Language Deficient Preschool Students.
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Descriptors: Language Deficient/Preschool/Bilingual/ESOL/Peer Tutors/Parent Involvement/Critical Thinking Skills/Language Comprehension/Language Fluency/Language Proficiency

Seven language deficient preschool students were exposed to a variety of experiences and strategies in order to improve both language and thinking skills. The program was based on a multicultural awareness curriculum which utilized such teaching strategies as role-playing, parental involvement, storytelling, puppet play, cooking, show and tell, arts and crafts, etc. The results indicated increases in both thinking and language skills. Students improved their critical thinking skills as indicated through brainstorming activities and group discussions. The language skills of comprehension, proficiency, and fluency also showed improvement. It was concluded that a multicultural program that was developed through varied language enrichment strategies providing language exposure and encouraging language usage can increase thinking and language skills. The results and activities of this project were shared with other prekindergarten and kindergarten educators. Appendices include home language survey, teacher observation checklist, multicultural questionnaire, and parent letter. Language and critical thinking skills pre/posttests are also included.

Authorship Statement/Document release

Authorship Statement

I hereby testify that this paper and the work it reports are entirely my own. Where it has been necessary to draw from the work of others, published or unpublished, I have acknowledged such work in accordance with accepted scholarly and editorial practice. I give this testimony freely, out of respect for the scholarship of other workers in the field and in the hope that my work, presented here, will earn similar respect.

/s/ Eyad T Alhamwan
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Practicum Title A Multicultural Awareness Program to Improve Language and Thinking Skills to a Group of Language Deficient Preschool students.

Student's Name Marilyn Altamura

Program Site Fort Lauderdale Date 6-8-93

Observer's Name Nancy G. Love Nancy G. Love
(please print---------sign)

Observer's position Early Childhood Teacher Phone # 726-7550

Observer's comment on impact of the project (handwritten):

The use of a multicultural hands on program to enhance language and thinking skills to language deficient students was beneficial because it provided many language experiences through a variety of strategies while instilling pride, awareness and acceptance of many cultures.

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CHAPTER I

Purpose

School and Community Setting

The place where the practicum project took place is a public elementary school in the southeastern area of the United States. The school was established in 1975. The school encompasses prekindergarten through the fifth grade. The school serves a community diverse in ethnic and economic make-up.

The school's enrollment is 1,086. The ethnic distribution, as indicated in the school report, is 619 Whites, 311 Blacks, 116 Hispanics, and 40 Asians. Approximately one-third of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Eligibility for free or reduced lunch is an indication of low economic status. Although not stated in the report, the economic diversity in the community is quite observable. Homes range from middle-income single-family and condominium dwellings to low-income tract apartments. There is a particularly deprived four-block area of the community that is comprised solely of these low-income tract apartments. Many of these homes are occupied by

multifamily units. A large percentage of these households are made up of newly arrived immigrants from Jamaica, Haiti, and Asia.

The school has a main building which houses the administrative offices, media center, cafeteria, lounge, and 36 classrooms. There are also two newly constructed buildings. One of these new buildings houses a computer lab, science lab, and an experimental class (alternative education/dropout prevention). The other building is a four-class kindergarten pod. In addition, there are 12 portables on the school campus.

The faculty and staff at this practicum site include a principal, five office personnel, five custodians, five cafeteria workers, 48 classroom teachers, and 10 paraprofessionals. The school also has a primary generalist, guidance counselor, exceptional student education (ESE) specialist, psychologist, nurse, and resource officer. The school provides special classes in art, science, computer, music, library, and physical education. In addition, particular educational needs are met through classes for speech, gifted, specific learning disabilities (SLD), and dropout prevention.

The writer of this practicum is a prekindergarten teacher. There are two prekindergarten classes at this site. Each is housed in a double-width portable. This is the third year that the prekindergarten program has been in operation at this school. The practicum writer has been teaching in the program since it began at this site. The program is state funded with lottery money. Although the program itself exists through lottery monies, the classroom staff is certified and paid by the county school board. Each prekindergarten class has 20 children, one teacher, and one paraprofessional. These numbers remain constant. The students stay for the same 7 1/2 hour day as the entire elementary school. They also participate in the same special classes, such as art, science, music, and physical education, as the other grade levels.

Currently, students are enrolled in the program on a first-come basis, provided they and their families meet the eligibility requirements. The students must be four years old on or before September first of the school year. The families must meet certain criteria indicative of financial or cultural hardships. Families that reside out of the school's boundaries are

permitted to register their child provided they are residents of the county and they assume responsibility for transporting the student to and from the program.

The prekindergarten in which this practicum writer works consists of 20 nonhandicapped four- and five-year-olds. There are 10 boys and 10 girls in the class. The ethnic breakdown, as indicated on the registration forms, is seven Whites, nine Blacks, two Hispanics, and two Asians. The students in this class are of low economic status. There are five students in the class who live outside of this school's boundaries. There are five students who live in the aforementioned tract apartments. A total of 50 percent of the students are being raised in single-parent homes. There are six students whose dominate home language is a language other than English. This was documented on the home language survey (Appendix A:89) that was distributed and was also confirmed during parent conferences.

The program is based on the High-Scope approach. Students are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility for those choices and their possible consequences. Students also develop social and

academic skills in an informal play-oriented environment. Language comprehension, language proficiency, language fluency, and thinking skills are vital for the students to use to enable them to attain these goals and reach their potential.

The seven targeted students who participated in this practicum project were identified by the primary generalist and ESE specialist as being severely language deficient. The seven students scored extremely low on the language section of the Brigance Preschool Screen (Appendix B:91). Six of the seven were identified on the home language survey as children whose dominant home language is a language other than English.

Problem Statement

Prekindergarten students who lack adequate English language skills are unable to achieve their emotional and intellectual potential in the class. They are unable to use the English language to communicate their thoughts and feelings to others. Also, their lack of language skills prevents them from gaining an understanding of others through the simple use of questions and answers. These students cannot fully

appreciate the many new experiences that are being offered through stories, books, poems, sharing-time, etc. They are, likewise, unable to enrich others through their stories and experiences. These early years are the most crucial for developing language, building self-esteem, and fostering a positive attitude toward school and learning (Chud, 1983).

The main areas of concern in this practicum project were: the students' inability to follow oral directions (language comprehension); the students' inability to manipulate and have fun with language (language proficiency); the students' inability to convey their thoughts, feelings, and needs (language fluency); and the students' inability to use reflective thinking to arrive at and adequate language to express reasonable and responsible decision making (critical thinking).

The seven targeted students were identified by the primary generalist and the ESE specialist as being severely deficient in these areas of concern. The Brigance Preschool Screen was used to assess language and motor skill development. These seven children scored extremely low on the language section of this

assessment tool. The scores indicated a marked discrepancy between their scores and the average scores of the class. The average score of the targeted students for the combined language sections was 3.45. The average score for the class was 7.20 (Appendix B:91). The child development study team reviewed the Brigance results and recommended language enrichment. The Brigance results indicated the following areas to be especially difficult for the targeted students: language comprehension (picture vocabulary, prepositions, colors, numbers); language proficiency (repeating sentences); language fluency (relating personal data); and critical thinking (explaining the uses of objects).

These targeted students were also screened by the speech and language pathologist. They were each evaluated through the use of informal conversation and interview techniques (Appendix B:91). Examination of the results verified language deficiencies and recommended language enrichment. It was also recommended that their progress be monitored and that they be retested by the speech pathologist in September, 1993.

At the beginning of the school year, a home language survey was sent to all parents (Appendix A:89). Responses on this survey indicated that the home language of six of the targeted students was a language other than English.

Knowledge gathered from the screening tools, teacher observations, and parent conferences indicated that the language problems of the targeted group may be a result of developmental delay, bilingual factors, cultural considerations, lack of environmental stimuli, and/or medical complications. Regardless of the cause or causes for these language deficiency problems, the primary generalist, ESE specialist, speech-language pathologist, and child development study team all agreed that the targeted group was severely deficient in language skills, was at a disadvantage in school because of the deficiency, and therefore did need special attention and enrichment to help alleviate the problem.

The targeted group was comprised of seven children who are members of the practicum writer's prekindergarten class. There were three girls and four boys in the group.

Student 1 (S1), is a four-year-old Black girl who lives with her mother and two sisters, one older and one younger. S1 is the only member of the targeted group whose home language is English. S1 usually spoke in single words or short phrases. Most verbalizations were in response to teacher initiated questions and conversations. Very often S1 did not answer questions at all. When S1 did answer, it was in a very low voice. During the parent conference, the mother related that S1 began speaking late (approximately three years old) and that in comparison with the other daughters, S1 spoke far less than they did at equivalent ages.

Student 2 (S2) is a five-year-old boy. S2 was born in Colombia, South America and now lives with the biological parents, uncle, and grandmother. Spanish is the exclusive language spoken at home. The parents do not speak any English. S2 communicated in single word utterances, two word phrases, facial expressions, and body gestures. Verbalizations made in class were all in English.

Student 3 (S3) is a four-year-old girl. S3 was born in Pakistan and lives with the biological parents,

grandparents, and older sister. The parents are able to communicate in English, however. Urdu is the predominant language spoken in the home. S3 spoke in one word utterances, or short phrases, spoke in a very low voice, and rarely initiated communications. S3 is smaller and thinner than is average in the class. S3 missed many days of school due to colds.

Student 4 (S4) is a four-year-old girl. S4 was born in America and lives with the mother and sister. Both mother and sister were born in Haiti. Creole is the predominant language spoken in the home. S4's communications consisted of isolated words, short phrases, facial expressions, and hand motions. All verbalizations made in English were delivered in a loud, rapid voice. S4 spoke in Creole (softer and slower) when communicating with S5.

Student 5 (S5) is a five-year-old boy. S5 was born in America of Haitian immigrant parents. S5 lives with the biological parents and older sister. Creole is the predominant language in the home. The sister and parents can speak English well enough to be understood but rely mostly on Creole. S5 spoke very little in school. When S5 did speak, it was in English

in a very quiet voice, generally using short phrases. When S5 spoke to S4, it was in Creole and consisted of longer utterances delivered in a stronger voice.

Student 6 (S6) is a five-year-old boy. S6 was born in America of Vietnamese immigrant parents and lives with the biological parents and two sisters. During the parent conference, the mother said that Vietnamese is the main language spoken in the home. Mother also explained that the son had been late to speak, even in Vietnamese (3-3 1/2 years old). Mother related the fact that S6 had tubes placed in the ears at about 2 1/2 years of age. There was a problem with these tubes and they were being replaced this year. The tubes were just replaced during the practicum implementation. During the first two or three months in prekindergarten, S6 did not speak at all. At the beginning of the practicum implementation, S6 spoke in phrases and short sentences. These vocalizations were in English but were very difficult to understand. This speech was accompanied by exaggerated facial expressions and body gestures.

Student 7 (S7) is a four-year-old boy. S7 was born in the Dominican Republic and lives with the

mother, grandfather, and older brother. Spanish is the sole language spoken in the home. Mother, grandfather, and brother speak very little English. In class, S7 communicated in English with single words and short phrases. S7 also made use of facial expressions and pantomime.

The proposed practicum attempted to improve the language comprehension, the language proficiency, the language fluency, and the critical thinking skills of the seven targeted students through a program based primarily on multicultural awareness and hands-on activities.

The initial focus of this practicum was solely the ESL students. However, after careful examination of available research, results of the language portion of the Brigance test, and discussions with the professional staff involved in testing, it was decided that the strategies proposed could be used to meet the needs of language deficient students who were not ESL. Therefore, S1 was included in the group of targeted students.

Outcome Objectives

The targeted group engaged in a variety of activities designed to improve their language and thinking skills. They developed these skills through participation in a multicultural program created to enhance awareness, appreciation, and acceptance of all people. This program used a hands-on approach incorporating a variety of strategies including, but not limited to: group size variations, peer tutoring, role-playing situations, multisensory activities, plan and cook experiences, parental involvement arrangements, field trip ventures, show-and-tell sessions, children's literature exposure, etc.

In an attempt to achieve the goals of improved language comprehension, language proficiency, language fluency and thinking skills, the following objectives were proposed:

1. Following 10 weeks of implementation of a multicultural awareness program, at least five of the seven targeted students will improve by 50 percent their comprehension of prepositions and prepositional phrases as demonstrated by teacher-made Total Physical Response (TPR) pre/posttests (Appendix C:94).

2. Following 10 weeks of implementation of a multicultural awareness program, at least five of the seven targeted students will improve, by 50 percent, their ability to proficiently repeat eight sentences consisting of five to eight words, as evidenced by teacher-made pre/post rating scale (Appendix D:96).

3. Following 10 weeks of implementation of a multicultural awareness program, at least five of the seven targeted students will increase, by 50 percent, their use of sentences with four words or more during conversation, as evidenced by teacher-made pre/post tallies (Appendix E:98). The targeted students will demonstrate a positive attitude change as evidenced by a 50 percent increase in the number of positive body language and positive behavior incidents recorded on the teacher observation checklist (Appendix F:100).

4. Following 10 weeks of implementation of a multicultural awareness program, at least five of the seven targeted students will increase, by 50 percent, their critical thinking skill of brainstorming as evidenced by an increase in the number of brainstorm responses to a given topic during teacher-made pre/post tally (Appendix G:102).

CHAPTER II

Research and Solution Strategy

Children entering school today bring with them a host of special needs that must be addressed, one of significant importance being limited-English proficiency (LEP). This term is generally used to describe students who speak a language other than English at home and who either do not speak English at all or do not speak English well enough to communicate in the school setting (Hoegl, 1985). Those who are LEP run a higher risk for academic and social failure. They also suffer from low self-esteem and a lack of motivation. Research has shown that limited-English-proficient students who have been given the opportunity to learn English in a prekindergarten program reach higher levels of proficiency and school success than those for whom second language learning was developed (Hoegl, 1985).

Researchers agree that the problem is limited-proficiency and that the solution is early intervention. Beyond this initial agreement, however, opinions and strategies are quite divergent. Some

researchers claim that the bilingual approach is the best solution (Campos, 1985; Dolson, 1985; Hoegl, 1985). Other researchers believe that English as a Second Language (ESL), sometimes referred to as mainstreaming, is a better and/or more realistic approach (Rice, Hadley and Sell, 1991; Chud, 1983). Even when researchers seem to agree on the approach they often disagree on other aspects, such as appropriate strategies, curriculum content, and curriculum emphasis. Some researchers investigate the actual language acquisition process in order to select the most appropriate program and strategies (Fillmore, 1985). Through the use of investigative strategies, such as studies, interviews, and surveys, researchers hope to find the most effective solution to the problem of limited-proficiency and its implications for early childhood education.

As a means of evaluating the benefits of early childhood education on limited-English-proficient students, Hoegl (1985) compiled information obtained from surveys, interviews, and questionnaires. The sources questioned for this research were nationally known early childhood educators, along with staff

members from a number of state and federally funded preschools. According to the findings, a special language program was the most beneficial for meeting the needs of the limited-English-proficient students. The most effective of these special language programs provided initial dominant language instruction (Hoegl, 1985). English language instruction increased as the students' proficiency increased. Eventually, English was the predominant language being used in the classroom. In addition to language development, there were a number of other goals in these effective programs. These goals included: social development, school readiness, self-esteem, and self-confidence. These goals were achieved by having the students participate in group activities, follow directions, accept responsibility, and develop work habits. In the most successful programs, the students learned about shapes, colors, numbers, and body parts. They also develop skills in listening, comprehending, comparing, and classifying (Hoegl, 1985).

Other dominant language programs have been developed and evaluated. One model was set up in the Carpinteria school district in California (Campos,

1985). This program was developed to meet the needs of the Spanish-speaking population of the district. The main goal of the preschool program was to bring the Spanish-dominant preschoolers up to a readiness level comparable to that of their English-speaking peers. The program attempted to achieve this goal by developing skills in the following areas: Spanish language, cognitive skills associated with a preschool curriculum, learning strategies, and self-esteem (Campos, 1985).

At the beginning of the school year, the entire program was in Spanish. Other than the language, the curriculum followed that of an English language preschool program. Although there were opportunities for natural exposure to English throughout the year, it was not until the latter part of the school year that English language time was incorporated into the students' lessons. These lessons included: total response activities, songs, games, and filmstrips (Campos, 1985).

According to student achievement measures, the program succeeded not only in bringing the students' level of readiness up to, but also exceeding, the

readiness level of their English-speaking peers. Also, the students in the program scored higher in oral English proficiency than did Spanish-speaking students who did not participate in the model program (Campos, 1985). The implications of the program results are very interesting and important. According to the results of this program, students who are instructed in their dominant language develop academic skills and concepts more rapidly and with greater comprehension than do those students who have been instructed in the second language (Campos, 1985).

In an effort to understand the social interactions of speech and/or language deficient students, and therefore be able to provide an appropriate program, Rice, Hadley, and Sell (1991) conducted a language acquisition study. The investigators were particularly interested in the students' willingness to initiate interactions, the children's choices as recipients of these interactions, and the types of responses used by the students. To study these aspects of linage, the researchers observed 26 students in a language acquisition preschool (LAP). These students were classified in one of four groups according to speech

and/or language development. Of the 26 subjects, nine were normal language models (developing language normally), six were specific language impaired (SLI), three were speech impaired (SI), and eight were learning English as a second language (ESL) (Rice, Hadley, and Sell, 1991).

The students were observed while they engaged in a 40-minute play center time. The students were free to choose from one of the following areas: the quiet area (books, puzzles), the block area, the art area, and the dramatic play area. All observable data was collected according to the Social Interactive Coding System (SICS). SICS permits an observer to follow a five-minute on, five-minute off format in which all of the students' social interactions within the first five-minute segment are continuously recorded. This system allows an observer to ascertain the students' social assertiveness in a relatively short span of time. For this study, two trained observers, using SICS, gathered data during three separate 40-minute play centers. The data was collected over a four-month period and approximately 60-minutes of data was collected from each student (Rice, Hadley, and Sell, 1991).

According to Rice, Hadley, and Sell (1991), the results of this study indicated that students with limited communication skills directed most of their initiations to adults and that their initiations were either short or nonverbal. Results also indicated that normal language models were the preferred recipients of all the students' initiations. Also, normal language peers initiated more and longer interactions. In this study, ESL students were the least likely to initiate interactions and were also the least likely to be chosen as the recipients of initiation (Rice, Hadley, and Sell, 1991).

The implications of this study are very significant. Early intervention is needed to ensure positive communication skills and so positive social skills. Students with successful communication skills appear to be the most socially accepted and sought-after students. Communication skills are shown as vital for a good self-concept. According to Rice, Hadley, and Sell (1991), the speech-impaired language-impaired and ESL students benefit from interacting with normally developing peers. This enables them to model communication skills that they will need to survive in

the world. This opportunity is provided by mainstreaming.

In order to provide the best language-learning environment for the LEP student, it is important to understand the processes which take place during second language acquisition. According to Fillmore (1985), three types of processes occur during language learning. The three types of processes are labeled as social, linguistic, and cognitive. The social processes are the steps involved by which language learners and speakers of the targeted language create a social setting that encourages communication. The linguistic processes are the means by which assumptions that are held by the speakers of the targeted language cause them to choose and modify the linguistic data that they produce for the sake of the learner. Finally, the cognitive processes are the analytical procedures which take place in the learners' head and ultimately result in language acquisition (Fillmore, 1985).

Assuming these processes are available to all second language learners, what then, questioned Fillmore (1985), are the determining factors affecting

the ease or difficulty with which a student acquires a new language? A decade of studies, observations, and research review seem to indicate, according to the Fillmore (1985), that the variability found in second language acquisition can be attributed to differences found among the learners' ability to apply cognitive mechanisms. These mechanisms include auditory perception, auditory memory, and pattern recognition. Other variables which affect language acquisition are the learners' age, personality, and social skills. Apparently, all of these variables should be considered when setting up an effective language learning situation (Fillmore, 1985).

This same question, as to why some students are more successful at second language acquisition, was of interest to other researchers. Saville-Troike (1987) conducted a study in order to better understand this phenomenon. As a means of classification, second language learners were labeled as one of two fundamentally different types based on differences in social and cognitive orientation. These basic learner types were the inner-directed (or reflective) and the other-directed (or socially-oriented). Saville-Troike

(1987) proposed that inner-directed learners were more likely to go through a "silent" period while acquiring a second language. This "silent" period was a time during which the learner, hypothesized by Saville-Troike (1987), was not only passively assimilating the second language input but also, and more importantly, actively processing the input data by means of private speech.

In order to test the hypothesis, Saville-Troike (1987) conducted a study involving nine ESL students ranging in age from three to eight. A microphone was attached to the students' collars so that private speech data could be collected. Six of the subjects were videotaped at weekly intervals during the first six months that they were in an English medium classroom. The remaining three subjects were observed without being recorded for the first three weeks. Then they were recorded weekly through the fall semester. Each recorded session lasted from one to three hours and recordings totalled 130 hours (Saville-Troike, 1987).

Saville-Troike (1987) examined the learning strategies evident in each subjects' private speech.

The learning strategies of the younger subjects (three-five years old) were contrasted with those of the older subjects (six-eight years old). The results of the study indicated that the silent period was a time of active language acquisition. Also, there was greater contrast in the quantity and quality of the older children's private speech in relation to their particular learning style. The inner-directed learners seemed to focus on understanding the code involved in the second language. In doing so, they gained mastery of the language. Saville-Troike (1987) concluded that the learning strategies of the inner-directed students assisted them in successful second language acquisition. Additional research is necessary to better understand the learning process and language acquisition so that the needs of the LEP students can be met and their task of language acquisition can be facilitated.

Research studies show how important language proficiency is in relation to academic and social success. An effective prekindergarten program must, therefore, strive to create an atmosphere which promotes language production. Isbell and Raines (1991)

conducted a study to examine language production. The researchers observed a class of 21 students, ranging in age from 4.8 to 6.2, during three play centers. The play centers chosen for this study were the blocks, housekeeping, and thematic. One purpose of the study was to find what effects each of the play centers had on the students' oral language production as indicated by verbal fluency and length of utterance. Another purpose was to find what effects each of the play centers had on the students' diversity of vocabulary. Lastly, Isbell and Raines (1991) wanted to find what, if any, differences would be observed between the males and the females in the study.

In order to ascertain the answers to these questions, Isbell and Raines (1991) placed each of the students into one of four groups. The groups were comprised of four, five, or six members. The investigators rotated group members in order to encourage varied interaction opportunities. Each group was randomly assigned to a play center. A teacher accompanied the group and remained nearby but not in the play center nor in the play situation. The investigators gathered language samples by videotaping

these play sessions. The taping began in the block center, then in housekeeping, and lastly in the thematic center. Each center was recorded five times for a period of 15 minutes for each of the four groups. The same taping pattern was followed throughout the 15 sessions of the five-week study. This supplied the investigators with 300 minutes of language samples (Isbell and Raines, 1991).

The results of this study indicated that language fluency and vocabulary diversity were greater in the block area, length of utterances was equivalent in each center, and there was no significant difference in language production or vocabulary diversity between the males and females. The results seem to indicate that play in general and block play in particular are effective means of encouraging and enhancing language fluency and vocabulary diversity (Isbell and Raines, 1991).

In addition to play center, there are many activities that enhance language production. An effective prekindergarten can incorporate different approaches and strategies. One approach used in many classrooms is the whole language approach (Hamayan and

Pfleger, 1987). This approach involves students in all modes of communication. According to Hamayan and Pfleger (1987), the whole language approach is the most natural setting in which to encourage language and literacy in students. Hamayan and Pfleger (1987) describe three whole-language methods. These methods are the language experience approach, shared big books, and sustained silent reading.

The language experience approach (LEA), according to Hamayan and Pfleger (1987) helps ESL students make the transition from oral language to standard printed English. This approach is based on the belief that students are better able to read materials based on their own experiences and in their own words. The first step is to choose a topic and then elicit oral language from the students. This language can then be expanded or modified in a natural, gentle, nonthreatening manner. When it is time to transcribe the oral language into a written story, there are two ways of taking dictation from the students. One way is to write down the exact words that the study uses. The other way involves modifying the responses to make them conform to the rules of written English. The next

steps include reading the language experience story in various ways (each sentence, entire story, group reading, individual reading, etc.) and engaging in follow-up activities (find a word, say a word, etc.) (Hamayan and Pfleger, 1987).

Another whole language method described by Hamayan and Pfleger (1987) was shared reading with big books. This method involves the use of very large books to simulate the enjoyable experience of a bedtime or lap story. The students participate in this experience as listeners, as choral readers, or as individual readers. The students are encouraged to gather around and get comfortable. The book and characters are discussed before the first reading. Then as the story is read, each word is pointed to with a finger, pointer, ruler, etc. The story is reread and the reader stops to ask comprehension questions. On the second day, the story is read through once and then the students are encouraged to echo-read. During subsequent readings, the students read aloud as a group, in pairs, and individually. On other days the students participate in various follow-up activities, such as story dramatization, story illustrations, and story editing.

Lastly, Hamayan and Pfleger (1987) describe the whole-language method of sustained silent reading (SSR). During this SSR time, everyone in class including the teacher picks a book and reads it silently. This encourages students to see reading as a pleasurable, non-stressful experience. It's a time for the students to read for the sheer enjoyment.

Books are a wonderful source of entertainment and enlightenment. However, not every book is appropriate. The most worthwhile books should be found and incorporated into the prekindergarten program. This issue of appropriate literature for young students was addressed in an article by Harris (1991). The article dealt with African-American literature but its implications can be extended to all multicultural literature. According to Harris (1991), there are three main categories for classifying multicultural literature. These categories are: social conscience, melting pot, and culturally conscious literature.

Social conscience books were written with good intentions but had a tendency to perpetuate old stereotypes or create new ones. Books found in this

category dealt with issues of school desegregation and integration (Harris, 1991).

The second category, melting pot books, are usually picture books that deal with interracial friendships and stories about middle-class African-Americans. These books are better than the social conscience books in that they do away with most stereotypes. These books, however, do not tap the richness or uniqueness of African-American experiences (Harris, 1991).

The third category, the culturally conscious books, are the best choice for conveying the African-American experiences, according to Harris (1991). The stories are about African and Southern American heritage, fighting racism and discrimination, friendships, family relationships, and growing up.

The following are some of the benefits students can reap from exposure to appropriate African-American literature (and appropriate literature from all cultures): increased general knowledge, increased vocabulary, exposure to suitable role models, insight into critical issues, enhanced imagination, pure enjoyment, inspiration for creativity, and greater

pride. Harris (1991) examines the value of African-American literature but the implications extend to the literature from all cultures. All multiculture literature chosen for the classroom should be unbiased, honest, and inspiring. Enabling students to learn more about their own culture and the culture of others helps to instill both pride and acceptance (Harris, 1991).

Another means of enhancing self-pride is to show respect for the students' culture by accepting and encouraging parental involvement. Research has shown that students have the greatest academic and social success when parents are actively involved in the program (Arnberg, 1983). There are many ways to involve parents in the educational process.

The Brownsville Consolidated School District, Texas (Lenz, 1987) developed a unique program to encourage parental involvement and meet the needs of the four year olds in the district. The program was instituted as an alternative to an in-school situation which would have required a classroom, teaching staff, materials, and equipment. Instead, this program was very cost efficient. Parents and children attended the viewing of an instructional videotape. After viewing,

parents and children were grouped separately to review, discuss, and participate in follow-up activities. Each group was facilitated by trained aides. The aides demonstrated various at-home enrichment activities for the parents to enjoy with their children. An entire session, video and group time, lasted approximately 90 minutes (Lenz, 1987).

Each video had three components: lesson, story telling, and home activity. Video characters encouraged active participation by speaking to the children and eliciting responses. The video also used puppets, games, music, etc. to teach the inspire the children. This project was very effective in meeting its initial goals. These program goals included: language development (English and Spanish), improved readiness skills, increased self-esteem, community awareness, positive attitude toward school, parent participation, and improved parenting skills (Lenz, 1987).

Another method used to enhance language production, self-concept, and overall school success is that of peer tutoring. According to research (Eiserman, 1988; Greenwood et al., 1987), peer tutoring

is beneficial to both the tutor and the tutee. Peer tutoring improves both academic skills and social skills. Peer tutoring builds self-esteem in both the tutor and the tutee.

When planning an effective prekindergarten program that will foster language development, Chud (1983) maintains that it is essential to create an atmosphere that is secure and relaxed. Equally important is that it must be a stimulating environment that is conducive to academic and social growth. This pleasant setting can encourage students to enjoy language through playful manipulation. This can help the students gain some control of the language and so feel more confident. This can be accomplished through such things as the rhyming and alliteration that we find in songs, poems, and nursery rhymes (Hoegl, 1985).

The writer agrees with many of the findings and suggestions given in the research literature and implemented a variety of language activities with the seven targeted students during the 10-week implementation period.

According to the research, programs that provide initial dominant-language instruction and increase

second-language instruction as the students' proficiency increases, seem to be the most beneficial (Campos, 1985; Dolson, 1985; Hoegl, 1985). However, with the school population being so culturally varied, the ability to provide dominant-language instruction for each student was unrealistic. Accordingly, the following strategies were incorporated in an effort to make the mainstream classroom as culturally aware and accepting as possible. The strategies were implemented in an attempt to create a positive climate that fostered language acquisition.

One of the strategies was the use of appropriate multicultural literature, as supported by Harris (1991). Another strategy which was incorporated in the implementation was the use of a variety of hands-on materials and activities as suggested in the research by Campos (1985) and Hoegl (1985).

Parental involvement was another strategy used in the implementation program, as suggested by Arnberg (1983). This involvement included the sharing of the parents' time and/or knowledge with the class. Parents were also encouraged to participate in the completion of parent/child take-home activities. This strategy

was suggested in the Brownsville Consolidated School District project (Lenz, 1987).

The use of peer tutors was incorporated in the implementation phase as was suggested by Eiserman (1988) and Greenwood et al. (1987). Another strategy that was used was dramatization. This strategy was suggested by Hamayan and Pfleger (1987) as a follow-up to story-telling activities.

Big books were utilized as one of the whole-language activities supported by Hamayan and Pfleger (1987). Also, suggestions mentioned in research done by Hoegl (1985) concerning playing with language through rhyming was incorporated in the implementation using nursery rhymes.

In addition to these strategies which were suggested in the research literature, language enhancement activities which were observed in other prekindergarten sights and/or other novel ideas were incorporated in the implementation phase of the program. These strategies included: group size variations, field trips, microphone and tape recorder use, interactive communications, story drawing, picture and story captioning, and multicultural activities

(arts and crafts, cooking, sharing). Throughout the program proper language usage was encouraged through modelling of peers and adults in the class. Adults rephrased utterances into correct form and/or extended sentence form in a relaxed, noncritical manner (Chud, 1983). Vocabulary was introduced through concrete objects, stories, books, games, songs, activities, etc. An understanding of prepositional words and phrases was also developed through the use of concrete objects, stories, books, games, songs, and activities influenced in some way by the cultural focus of the week.

Through the implementation of these strategies, the writer hoped to improve the language and thinking skills of the targeted students. The specific skills aimed at were language comprehension, language proficiency, language fluency, and critical thinking. The cost factor for the implementation was low. The writer purchased some inexpensive books and cooking items. Other items were both teacher-made and student-made.

CHAPTER III

Method

The implementation of this multicultural awareness program was geared to the seven targeted language deficient students, but involved the entire nonhandicapped prekindergarten class. Speaking up, speaking out, and sharing were encouraged throughout the implementation period. The multicultural program activities took place daily in large circle groups lasting approximately 30-45 minutes and daily in small groups lasting approximately 20 minutes. The large circle usually consisted of a greeting time, during which attendance was taken; a music time during which songs, poems, or fingerplays were performed; a story time, during which a book was read or a story told; an activity time, during which the book was discussed or an activity was done; and a movement time, during which exercises or record activities were enjoyed. The small group arrangement consisted of 10 student members and one adult, either the teacher or paraprofessional. Each student, whether in the targeted group or not, was paired with a peer. They referred to each other as

"peer pals." The targeted subjects did not all meet in the same group. This allowed for a variety of interactions and language modelling opportunities. In addition to large and small group times, students' interactions were monitored and encouraged during the daily play centers. These play centers lasted approximately 30 minutes.

The practicum writer attempted to create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere that was conducive to growth and learning. Language development was enhanced through calm, non-critical modelling, rephrasing, and extending (these being among the natural methods used at home with first language acquisition in very young children).

The practicum writer adopted a multicultural program approach in the hope of creating a classroom that was as culturally aware and accepting as possible in a mainstream situation. During each week of the practicum implementation period, one particular country was focused upon. Each week a teacher-made poster was displayed showing a simple map of the appropriate country. The poster also had the name of the country printed across the top, a picture of the country's

flag, and the word or words used as a greeting in that country's language. The students were greeted at attendance time with this word or phrase. The students were encouraged, but not forced, to return the greeting. Also, one classroom bulletin board was set aside to display the poster and the arts and crafts projects, or other appropriate materials related to the particular country. Every Friday, the students enjoyed a special treat and a special activity (video, parade) that was in some way associated with the country being focused upon that week.

The order in which cultural groups were focused upon was based on the amount of representation in the class. The group with the greatest class representation was first. This criteria was used for the entire 10 weeks. Once each culture represented in the class had been highlighted, cultural groups were chosen according to the teacher's discretion, however, students' suggestions were also considered. Since the American culture had been given a great deal of attention in the school already, through predominately American books, stories, fairy tales, movies, etc., it was the last country focused on in this program.

A number of multicultural materials, such as pictures and books, were set out in the room prior to the implementation of the program. Appropriate materials continued to be introduced, examined, and added to the classroom throughout the program.

At the end of each week, the prekindergarten staff members discussed the events of the previous week, the progress (if any) shown by the targeted students, and the plans for the following week.

Week 1

On Monday and Tuesday, the seven targeted students completed the language comprehension pretest (Appendix C:94), the language proficiency pretest (Appendix D:96), the language fluency pretest (Appendix E:98), the teacher observation checklist (Appendix F:100), and the thinking skills pretest (Appendix G:102). The tests were scored and recorded. At the end of the first day, a letter was sent home to the parents to introduce the program and to elicit their help (Appendix H:104). Volunteers were invited to work one-on-one with the targeted students.

The focus for Week 1 was altered from Africa to Ireland. This was done because implementation of this

program began on March 17 (St. Patrick's Day). On Wednesday, during the 30-minute large circle time, the students were introduced to and discussed a new large circle participation strategy. This strategy allowed and encouraged the students to speak out, question, interact, and think aloud during the large circle activities. Previously, this procedure was only followed during small group time. The procedure during large circle time had been listening quietly and raising a hand to be recognized. Possible positive and negative aspects of this new procedure were discussed. The entire group set up guidelines for this procedure and planned to evaluate its merits or faults throughout the implementation period. The students and teacher altered and modified the original guidelines when necessary. Raising hands was deemed appropriate during certain activities, such as sharing time. The students were then introduced to the first in the series of the multicultural posters. They discussed the map, flag, and typical Irish greeting, "top of the morning." The students were then told a story about the legends of leprechauns. During small group time the students were introduced to their peer pals. Peer pals only worked

together during small group time. Then the students discussed leprechauns and worked with their peer pals to create pictures of leprechauns using markers, paints, and crayons. The adult in the group transcribed the students' exact words below the pictures.

At play center time, students were permitted to choose their play center. The centers that were set up in the class were: easel painting, arts and crafts (crayons, scissors, glue, paper, paint, clay, etc.), blocks, housekeeping, dramatic play, water table, book area, table toys (puzzles, pegs, pattern blocks, etc.), discovery (magnets, rulers, sorting toys, etc.), and floor toys (tinker toys, snap blocks, etc.). During this time, the teacher and paraprofessional observed and facilitated language production through language modelling and divergent questioning.

On Thursday, during the large circle time, a book, What is a Rainbow, was read and discussed using the new strategy of interactive communication. The students were given a prism to examine. In conjunction with the Irish legends, the students were asked the question, "What do you think you might find at the end

of a rainbow?" Brainstorming strategy was used to attain a variety of answers. All answers were transcribed onto a large rainbow poster. During small group, the students worked with their peer pals to paint and discuss rainbow pictures.

On Friday, during large circle time, the students listened to the book A First Book of Colors. The students then discussed their favorite colors. They discussed the possible reasons that people wear green on St. Patrick's Day. Then the students made a graph, using strips of various colors to indicate their favorite color. The students predicted, estimated, counted, added, compared, etc. During small group, the students made green pudding. The students ate the pudding in the afternoon while watching The Wizard of Oz.

Week 2

The focus for Week 2 was on Africa. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the African poster. The poster was comprised of the word Africa, a map of Africa, and an African word for hello (jambo). The students were greeted with the word "jambo" during attendance. The students learned the

song "Jambo to Everyone." The song was teacher-made and sung to the tune of "London Bridges." A book, Ashanti to Zulu, was shared and discussed. During small group time, the students were introduced to a new block set containing jungle animal figures. The students examined, manipulated, and played with the new set. The jungle animals were then put out for use during play centers. The students decided to put the jungle animals into the block center.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students were again greeted with the word jambo. They sang the song "Jambo to Everyone." The students listened to and then discussed the book The Happy Lion. The students pretended to be jungle animals by making appropriate animal sounds and movements. During small group time, the students used clay to make jungle animals. Finished creations were put on display with signs noting the name of the "artist" and the story he or she told to the adult in the group.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students recited the fingerplay, "Eency, Weency Spider." They listened to and discussed an African folktale, "Anansi the Spider." During small group

time, the students worked with their peer pals to create spiders using scissors, paper, glue, etc. The spiders were hung from the ceiling and bulletin board. During outdoor play, the students were taught an African game called DaGa (The Big Snake). One student was the snake. The snake chased the other players. As each player was caught, he/she joined hands with the existing snake and chased the remaining players.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students recited "Eency Weency Spider" and acted out "Little Miss Muffet." The students then listened to a rereading of "Anansi the Spider." During small group time, the students painted Anansi pictures and created their own stories. These pictures and stories were combined into a class fokelore book.

Notes were sent home (as they were each Thursday) inviting members of that week's focus group to bring in a culturally appropriate show and tell (Appendix I:106).

On Friday, during large circle time, the students shared their show-and-tell items. The students then listened to the class book that they had created about Anansi. Then the students listened and moved to an

activity record called "The Elephant." Instead of a small group time, the students ate jungle animal cookies and watched The Jungle Book.

Week 3

The focus for the week was on the Haitian culture. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the poster of Haiti. The students learned that the people in Haiti speak French and Creole. The students were told that many French and Creole words are the same. The students were greeted with "bonjour" during attendance. The globe was introduced, examined, and discussed. The students learned to distinguish the water from the land masses. The students were shown the location of Haiti in relation to the United States. The students were given a simplified story version of the reasons Haitians come to the United States and the manner in which they travel. The students were encouraged to think aloud about the possible dangers involved in such travel. The Haitian students shared their experiences. One student knew a family member who had come by boat. Another student (S5) had recently returned from a two-week visit to Haiti. S5 shared the experience of his

airplane trip. The students then used brainstorming to think of as many modes of transportation as possible. Responses were written and/or drawn on a large sheet of oaktag. The students used their entire bodies to act like various transportation vehicles. During small groups, the students made paper airplanes with their peer pals. During outdoor play, the students flew their airplane creations.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students were greeted with "bonjour." The students learned the song, "Frere Jacques," in French and English. Then the students discussed the globe and were introduced to a globe ball. The ball was passed around, examined, and discussed. The students tossed and rolled the ball. The students were then shown a large map which they examined and discussed. They played a game, "Toss the Vehicle." The students each had a turn tossing a small toy car, boat, and airplane onto the map. The object of the game was to get the car onto land, the boat onto water, and the airplane onto either. During small group time, the students conducted sinking and floating experiments. The students tested numerous objects in a

large basin of water. Each small group made a chart displaying the results of the experiment.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned the song "Row, Row, Row, Your Boat." The students from each small group shared, read, and explained their sink/float chart from the previous day's experiment. The students then played a pantomime game called "Guess the Vehicle" during which students took turns acting like various vehicles while the other students guessed. During small group time, the students played another type of guessing game. The adult had an object in a small brown lunch bag. The students were given verbal clues as to what was inside the bag. The game ended when the students guessed the contents (a toy car) or gave up. The students were then allowed to play with the car. The students were asked to think of other things that have wheels. All responses were accepted and written and/or drawn on the chalkboard. The students were given paper circles (wheels), paper scraps, crayons, markers, glue, buttons, and string. They were told to work with their peer pals and create their own vehicle that moves on wheels. The adult in the group transcribed the

students' words onto the creation and combined all creations into a book.

As a special take-home activity, each student was given a brown lunch bag to take home. Each student was to put one object in the bag and return with it the following morning. When the students first arrived in school (before large circle time) they were permitted to play the new guessing game with their peer pals and other classmates.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students reviewed the location of Haiti on the globe and map and listened to S4 and S5 as they shared some information about their country. With the help of some divergent questions, the students learned about life in Haiti. The students learned that many fruits, including plantains, are grown and eaten in Haiti. The students were reminded that both French and Creole are spoken in Haiti and that S4 and S5 speak Creole at home. They were also reminded that many French and Creole words are the same. The students were shown a hat and asked what it was called. S4 and S5 were able to tell the class that in their houses (in Creole) it was called "chapeau." The students listened to the

story of The Cat in the Hat. During small group time, the students created crazy hats.

Notes were sent home telling the parents that Friday was going to be a "Crazy Chapeau Day" and that the students should be encouraged to wear hats to school. Show-and-tell notes were also sent home with the students of Haitian descent.

On Friday, during large circle time, the students in the focus group shared their stories and/or items that they brought from home. The students then donned their hats and went on a parade through the school. As a special treat the students ate plantains and watched The Cat in the Hat.

Week 4

The focus for Week 4 was on the Jamaican culture. On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students were shown the poster displaying the Jamaican map, flag, and island greeting "Hello, mon." The students learned a simple teacher-made song, "It's Jamaica," sung to the tune of "Frere Jacques." One of the students who had recently visited Jamaica was encouraged to share her experiences. Other students from Jamaica shared their stories. The students then listened to and discussed

the book A Family in Jamaica. During small group time, the students engaged in comparison and classification activities with various Jamaican fruit. An orange, lemon, grapefruit, and banana were handled, examined, and compared.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the class looked at the photographs brought in by the student who had recently made the trip to Jamaica. The questions, answers, and island descriptions that arose were developed into a big book. The class created this big book together. There was one page of brainstorming responses to the words "Life in Jamaica." During small group time, the students drew, colored, and/or painted island pictures that were incorporated into the big book. The adult in the group transcribed the students' exact words onto their pictures. The students were given an optional homework assignment of looking through magazines with their parents to find and cut out pictures that they thought depicted island life. These pictures were then put into the Jamaican big book.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students learned a new teacher-made fingerplay called

"Ten Little Oranges" which was sung to the tune of "Ten Little Indians." The students then listened to the book My Little Island. The students were then allowed to share any pictures that they had collected as their homework assignment. These pictures were added to the Jamaican big book with any caption the student wished. The students exercised by pretending to be walking and jogging on a Jamaican beach, jumping and swimming in the water, and bending and stretching for shells. During small group time, the students were given artificial fruit to handle and examine. They compared the artificial orange, lemon, grapefruit, and banana to each other and to the real fruit. The students chose one fruit to examine closely. The students in one small group chose the orange while the other small group chose the banana. A comparison chart was made in each small group. The adult transcribed all student responses involved in comparing the real and artificial fruit that the group had chosen. Peer pals worked together to examine and describe the fruit. The charts were displayed and the findings were shared at the end of the day. The artificial fruit used in this activity was added to the housekeeping area to be used during

play center time. Show-and-tell notes were sent home with the appropriate students.

On Friday, during large circle time, the students sang their new song and fingerplay. The students then listened to and read the Jamaican big book. The students brainstormed to come up with a title for the book. The students then voted on their favorite choice. The book was titled Sunny. Students shared the Jamaican stories and/or items that they brought in for show and tell. As a special Friday treat, in the place of small group time, the students prepared and tasted Jamaican fruit.

At the end of the day, the prekindergarten staff members met to discuss the activities for the following week. The staff members reviewed the observation checklist that was to be completed on each targeted student during Week 5 (Appendix J:108).

Week 5

The focus for Week 5 was on the Dominican Republic. The prekindergarten was involved in field day on Monday, so the students began to learn about the Dominican Republic on Tuesday. On Tuesday, during small group time, the students were introduced to the

poster displaying the map, flag, and greeting of the Dominican Republic. During attendance time on Tuesday, and the rest of the week, the students were greeted with the words "buenos dias." The students learned that Spanish is spoken in the Dominican Republic and that S7 speaks Spanish at home. S7 taught the class to count to five in Spanish. The students counted in Spanish while doing bending, stretching, hopping, jumping, and jogging exercises. During small group time, the students looked at pictures of the beaches in the Dominican Republic. Discussion was encouraged about the many things that can be enjoyed at the beach. The students mentioned a variety of activities, such as swimming, water skiing, boating, fishing, eating, sunning, etc. These responses were written and/or drawn on a large sheet of paper while also being recorded on the tape machine. The students listened to the playback of the tape. The students drew, colored, painted, or pasted pictures depicting fun at the beach. The students' descriptions of their pictures were both transcribed, word for word, and recorded. The entire groups' pictures were combined into a book and placed at the book areas along with the corresponding tape.

On Thursday, during large circle time, S7 taught the students that the word "amigo" means friend in Spanish. The students learned a new teacher-made song called "One, Two, Three Amigo." The students listened to and discussed the book Amigo Means Friend. During small group time, the students made life-sized pictures of their peer pals. The students did this by taking turns lying down on large sheets of paper while their peer pal traced their shape. A show-and-tell note was sent home with S7.

On Friday, during large circle time, S7 shared his photographs of family members in the Dominican Republic. The students sang "One, Two, Three Amigo" and listened to a rereading of "Amigo Means Friend." The students counted in Spanish and English as they exercised. During small group time, the students completed their life-sized amigo pictures by filling in all the details. Later in the day, as a special treat, the students examined sugar cane and tasted sugar cubes. The students had learned that sugar cane is the main export crop of the Dominican Republic. The students watched the Berenstain Bears' video Trouble with Friends.

Week 6

The country focused on during Week 6 was Colombia, South America. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the poster which displayed the map, flag, and greeting for Colombia. The students learned that Spanish is spoken in Colombia, as it is in the Dominican Republic. The students learned that S2 speaks Spanish as does S7. The students were given a choice of greetings to use during attendance time. The students were told they could say "buenos dias" or "hola." The students usually tried to respond with the greeting appropriate in the country being focused on, then added their own greeting of "I love you." These students listened to and discussed the book Perro Grande . . . Perro Pequeno. Translated, the book means big dog, little dog. During small group time, the students worked on a sorting activity. The students examined, compared, and sorted objects according to various criteria including size (big or little).

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students looked at, discussed, and heard selected readings from the book Colombia. The students learned that three of

the crops grown in Colombia are coffee, potatoes, and rice. The students listened to and sang with the record "Months of the Year." The months were sung in both Spanish and English. During small group time, the students were introduced to a discrimination game using their senses of sight and touch. The students were given three black film canisters. The students used their sense of sight to examine the contents. There was some coffee, rice, and potato chunks in the canisters. Next, the students were given three paper bags. The students used their sense of touch to reach in, feel, and guess the contents (coffee, rice, potato chunks).

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned a teacher-made fingerplay called "Ninos, Ninos" sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." The students handled, examined, and compared some coins used in Colombia with some coins used in the United States. As exercise, the students danced to a Spanish action game. Some words to a popular movement song were changed to make it a Spanish game. Instead of "We're going to Kentucky," the students sang "We're going to Colombia." During small

group time, the students were given six black film canisters, each with holes poked in the top. Two canisters contained coffee, two contained rice, and two contained small potato chunks. The students used their sense of smell to discriminate between the contents of the canisters. The students were encouraged to think out loud as they described, compared, and matched the canisters and their contents.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students sang the new Spanish songs. The students listened to and discussed the book The Five Senses. During exercises, the students counted to 10 in Spanish for each set of repetitions. During small group time, the students were given 10 closed canisters. Two canisters were filled with each of the following items: coffee, rice, potato chunks, sugar, and dried peas. The students used their sense of hearing to discriminate between the contents of the canisters. The students were again encouraged to think out loud as they described, compared, and matched the canisters and their contents. A show-and-tell note was sent home with S2.

On Friday, during large circle time, S2 shared a toy from Colombia. The students sang a song called "The Parts of the Body" and played a game about body parts and the five senses. Instead of small group time, the students had a special Friday treat. The students used their sense of taste to enjoy Colombian foods. The students had a taste of a Colombian meatpie. In the place of a cup of coffee, the students had some coffee ice cream.

Week 7

The country focused on during Week 7 was Vietnam. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were shown the poster displaying the map, flag, and Vietnamese greeting, "chao co." The globe and map were utilized to give the students some idea as to where S6's parents were born. Large poster pictures were used to illustrate life in Vietnam and to elicit discussions. The students learned that rice and sweet potatoes are Vietnam's main crops. The students were encouraged to think about the reason or reasons that the Vietnamese wear the distinctive straw hats depicted in the posters. During small group time, the students used construction paper, staples, and yarn to make

Vietnamese shade hats. Later in the day, the students wore their hats on a walk around the school campus.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students made an experience chart. The students recalled the events of the previous day, beginning with the sequence involved in making the Vietnamese hat and ending with the knowledge gained by taking the walk with the hat. The students' exact words were transcribed onto the chart. Individual students illustrated portions of the chart. The students "read" the chart when it was completed. During small group time, the students were given a white potato, a red potato, and a sweet potato. The students were encouraged to handle, examine, discuss, and compare the potatoes. The adult in the group cut the potatoes so that further examinatic could take place.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned about the Vietnamese moon celebration, known as Trung Thu. The students l ıtened to and discussed the book Moon Man. As a fun exercise and movement activity, the students did the moon walk to a Michael Jackson music tape. During small group time, the students made potato prints by dipping a cut potato

into a dish of paint and dabbing it on paper. The students experimented with white, red, and sweet potatoes to see which worked best and why.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students recited the rhyme "Hey Diddle, Diddle." After reciting the rhyme a few times, the students took turns acting out the parts using simple teacher-made props and/or masks. During small group time, the students began to make a paper lantern for the moon celebration. A show-and-tell note was sent home with S6.

On Friday, during large circle time, S6 shared a Vietnamese flag. The students listened to and discussed the book Happy Birthday, Moon. The students recited "Hey Diddle, Diddle." Then the students took turns using the flannel board and flannel board story pieces to retell "Hey Diddle, Diddle" in proper sequence. The students' recitations were taped, labeled, and put at the listening table in the book area. As a special treat, in the place of small group time, the students ate moon pies and watched The Jetson's - Astro's Top Secret (a moon adventure video).

Week 8

The country that was focused on during Week 8 was Pakistan. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the poster displaying the map, flag, and greeting used in Pakistan. The parents of S3 visited the class and briefly spoke with the students. The parents of S3 arrived wearing clothing typical of their country. The parents explained that they speak Urdu and that the words "Assalum - alikum" are the way to say hello. After the visitors left, the students discussed what they had learned. During small group time, the students learned that rice is an important crop in Pakistan. The students used rice, crayons, glue, and paint to make three-dimensional pictures. As an alternative medium, rice was put into the water table to be played with during play centers.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students were shown the location of Pakistan on both the globe and the map. The students were shown its proximity to India and given a very simplified explanation of the country's origin and its ties to India, as we will drew ideas from India for some stories and activities. These students listened to and discussed a folktale

from Pakistan called "The Magic Pumpkin." During small group time, the students drew pictures to illustrate their favorite part of "The Magic Pumpkin." The adult in the group transcribed the students' exact words onto the page. The adult combined the pages into a book, recorded the students' words onto a tape, labeled the tape, and placed both the book and tape at the listening table in the book area.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned a poem called "I Wish I May." The students listened to and discussed a portion (approximately one-third) of the book Aladdin. The sound track to the movie Aladdin was played while the students pretended to fly around the room on a magic carpet. During small group time, the students were shown a "magic" lamp. The students handled, examined, and discussed the lamp. The students each took a turn rubbing the lamp and making a wish. The adult in the group transcribed the wishes onto a sheet of paper. At the end of small group time, the students played a memory game. The adult read the wish and the students tried to recall who had made the wish.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students learned a simple teacher-made song called "Rub the Lamp" which was sung to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." The students listened to and discussed another portion (approximately one-third) of the book Aladdin. During and after this reading, as with all readings done in the class, the students were asked divergent questions that develop thinking and reasoning skills. These questions dealt with the possible motives and feelings of the characters, the possible consequences of particular actions, the possible outcomes from various situations and events, etc. During small group time, the students took an imaginary magic carpet ride. The adult in the group sprayed mounds of shaving cream on the table. The students listened to the sound track from the movie Aladdin while they played with the shaving cream. The students pretended that the heaps of shaving cream were the clouds in the sky. The students were encouraged to talk about their "trip" and describe how they thought the world would look from above. A show-and-tell note was sent home with S3.

On Friday, during large circle time, the students listened to and discussed the last portion of the book Aladdin. S3 brought in a brass vase and jewelry to share with the class. Instead of small group time, the students enjoyed a special Friday activity. (The practicum writer had planned to go on a field trip to see Aladdin, however, this was not possible due to a lack of program finances.) One of the students brought in a version of Aladdin. The students sat on carpet squares and ate rice cakes as they watched the video.

Week 9

The country focused on for Week 9 was Italy. On Monday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the poster displaying the Italian map, flag, and greeting. The students were greeted with the word "ciao" during attendance time. The students were taught an Italian folk song, "Mira la don don della." The students listened to and discussed the book Little Nino's Pizzeria. During small group time, the students engaged in role-playing situations to dramatize the book. The students took turns playing the parts of the store owner, the customers, and the waiter/waitress.

After dramatizing the actual events in the book, the students were encouraged to make up their own stories.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students practiced the folk song they learned on Monday. The students heard a second reading of Little Nino's Pizzeria. Various materials were introduced and discussed. These materials included: a tablecloth, pizza pan, rolling pin, empty sauce cans, empty pasta boxes, and an apron. The students engaged in a brainstorming activity to decide what could be done with these items. The students decided to put the new items into the dramatic play area. The students decided that they would set up a restaurant during play center time. The students also decided that they needed to convert the housekeeping area into the restaurant's kitchen and move the housekeeping table into the dramatic play area, which would become the dining area for the restaurant. During small group time, the students created and decorated a menu that they later hung up in the restaurant. The adult in the group transcribed the students' menu ideas.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned a teacher-made song called "Pizza"

which was sung to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." The students were shown a ball of pizza dough. The students handled, examined, described, and discussed the dough. The students watched a video about making pizza. During small group time, the students used clay to make clay pizza creations. Each pizza was put on display with a sign noting the name of the "cook" and the sequence of steps involved in the recipe. The adult in the group transcribed the students' exact words. During play centers, some students engaged in role-playing situations in the restaurant. Role-playing activities were photographed and made into a book.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students learned the poem "Oodles of Noodles." The students handled, examined, and compared uncooked noodles with cooked noodles. These students listened to the bean bag record and played "Pass the Bean Bag." The students used a bean bag but pretended and called it "pizza dough." During small group time, the students edited fairy tales and nursery rhymes by injecting "noodles" in the place of porridge, whey, pie, etc. These students dramatized these new

versions. These fairy tales and nursery rhymes were taped for later enjoyment. Show-and-tell notes were sent home.

On Friday, during large circle time, the students listened to and discussed the book A Family in Italy. The students shared their show-and-tell items which included Italian coins, photographs, a plaque, and a baby outfit. Instead of a small group time, the students engaged in a special Friday activity. These students made English muffin pizzas that were later eaten while watching Pinocchio.

Week 10

The country focused on during Week 10 was the United States of America. The students learned that, although the class is from all different backgrounds, they are all Americans. The students were encouraged to feel pride in the country from which they or their ancestors came and pride in the country in which they live.

Both Monday and Friday were days off for the students so the practicum writer decided to focus on the United States on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday.

The posttests were given on Monday and Tuesday of the following week.

On Tuesday, during large circle time, the students were introduced to the poster displaying the map, flag, and the greeting of "good morning." The students learned the song "Good Morning to You." The students handled, examined, and discussed the American flag. The students were encouraged to listen to and learn the words to the "Pledge of Allegiance." The students used the rhythm band instruments and marched to Hap Palmer's record, "Patriotic and Morning Time Songs." During small group time, the students decorated a large sheet of white clinic paper (approximately six feet long). The students used paint, crayons, markers, and paper scraps to decorate the paper with red, white, and blue flags and other patriotic designs.

On Wednesday, during large circle time, the students learned the song "This Land is Your Land." The students listened to, recited, and acted out "Yankee Doodle." For exercise, the students trotted and galloped around the room. During small group time, the students made applesauce.

On Thursday, during large circle time, the students learned a new teacher-made song called "Picnics" which was sung to the tune of "Frere Jacques." The students recalled the sequence of events used on the previous day for making applesauce. The teacher transcribed the students' words onto a large chart. The students read the chart and played various games to find specific letters, words, etc. on this recipe chart. The students listened to the record, "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," and pretended to be playing a baseball game. During small group time, the students made patriotic headbands. Instead of having a nap, the students had an indoor picnic. The decorated clinic paper was set out for a picnic cloth. The students ate applesauce and miniature hotdogs while they watched the movie The Song of the South.

On Monday and Tuesday of the eleventh week, the seven targeted students completed the language comprehension posttest (Appendix C:94), the language proficiency posttest (Appendix D:96), the language fluency posttest (Appendix E:98), the teacher observation checklist (Appendix F:100), and the thinking skills posttest (Appendix G:102).

CHAPTER VI

Results

The implementation of this program was evaluated by the results of four teacher-made pre/posttests. Objective 1, which was to improve language comprehension of prepositions, was measured with a total physical response (TPR) checklist (Appendix C:94). Objective 2, which was to improve the ability to proficiently repeat sentences, was measured by a rating scale (Appendix D:96). Objective 3, which was to increase language fluency during a conversation, was measured by a tally sheet (Appendix E:98). Also, improvement of student attitude was measured by a teacher observation checklist (Appendix F:100). Objective 4, which was to increase critical thinking during brainstorming, was measured by a tally sheet. The pretests were administered during the first week and the posttests were administered after the last week.

The evaluation process also included weekly meetings of the prekindergarten staff. The targeted students' progress was discussed during these meetings.

In addition, a midprogram observation checklist was used to measure the targeted students' progress during the fifth week of program implementation (Appendix J:108). The results of this checklist indicated that the targeted group had improved their language and thinking skills.

At the completion of the implementation period, the practicum writer compiled the scores from the tests and questionnaires in order to ascertain the progress made by the targeted students.

Regarding Objective 1, the practicum writer had estimated that at least five of the seven targeted students would show a 50 percent improvement in comprehension of prepositions. However, according to the results of the posttest, only three of the target students had improved by 50 percent or more.

The results of this first posttest revealed that all of the targeted students had shown some improvement in their comprehension of prepositions and prepositional phrases. According to the test results, two of the students had improved by 33 percent, two students had improved by 41 percent, one student had

improved by 50 percent, and two students had improved by 58 percent (see Table 1).

Table 1

Scores of Language Comprehension Pre/Posttest Total Physical Response Checklist

	Pretest		Posttest		
Student	Correct Responses	% Score	Correct Responses	% Score	Percent of Improvement
1	6	50	11	91.6	41.6
2	3	25	8	66.6	41.6
3	1	8.3	8	66.6	58.3
4	2	16.6	9	75	58.4
5	6	50	11	91.6	41.6
6	6	50	12	100	50
7	5	41.6	9	75	33.4

Regarding Objective 2, the writer had estimated that at least five of the seven targeted students would show a 50 percent improvement in their ability to proficiently repeat sentences. However, according to the results of the posttest, only four of the targeted students showed improvements of 50 percent or more.

The results of this posttest revealed that all of the targeted students had shown some improvement in

their ability to proficiently repeat sentences. According to pretest and posttest comparisons, one of the students showed a 12 percent improvement, two of the students showed a 37 percent improvement, three of the students showed a 50 percent improvement, and one of the students showed a 62 percent improvement (see Table 2).

Table 2

Scores of Language Proficiency Pre/Posttest Rating Scale

	Pretest		Posttest		
Student	Correct Responses	% Score	Correct Responses	% Score	Percent of Improvement
1	4	50	7	87.5	37.5
2	2	25	7	87.5	62.5
3	0	0	4	50	50
4	2	25	6	75	50
5	2	25	3	37.5	12.5
6	3	37.5	7	87.5	50
7	4	50	7	87.5	37.5

Regarding Objective 3, the writer had estimated that at least three of the seven targeted students would increase by 50 percent their use of sentences

consisting of four or more words in the testing situation.

The results of this test indicated that all of the targeted students showed an increase of 50 percent or higher in their use of sentences with four or more words. According to pretest and posttest comparisons, all of the students had more than doubled their quantity of sentences consisting of four words or more. This area of testing showed the greatest amount of improvement (see Table 3).

Table 3

Scores of Language Fluency
Pre/Posttest Tally

Student	Amount of Sentences with Four or More Words	
	Pretest	Posttest
1	2	8
2	0	5
3	6	22
4	0	20
5	10	27
6	0	18
7	9	23

As a by-product of this more tangible objective, the practicum writer also attempted to measure the positive attitude change of the targeted students. The practicum writer had estimated that the targeted students would demonstrate a positive attitude change, as indicated by a 50 percent increase in the number of positive body language and positive behavior incidences displayed during classroom sharing time. According to the observation checklist, all of the targeted students showed an increase of more than 50 percent in the number of positive attitude indicators (see Table 4).

Table 4

Scores of Attitude Change
Teacher Observation Checklist

Student	Number of Positive Body Language and Behavior Incidences	
	Pretest	Posttest
1	7	29
2	12	27
3	5	23
4	8	20
5	7	18
6	11	27
7	9	31

Regarding Objective 4, the practicum writer had estimated that at least five of the seven targeted students would show a 50 percent increase in the number of brainstorm responses to a given topic.

According to the results, all of the targeted students increased the number of their brainstorm responses by more than 50 percent (see Table 5).

Table 5

Scores of Critical Thinking Skills
Pre/Posttest Brainstorm Tally

Student	Number of Responses	
	Pretest	Posttest
1	15	26
2	14	26
3	11	19
4	12	19
5	10	21
6	14	25
7	12	23

Overall, the results of this implementation program were positive for both the targeted students and for the rest of the students in class. The students were eager to learn about the different

countries, to examine the classroom globe and map, to share objects and stories from different cultures, to teach each other new words and phrases, and to incorporate new cultural knowledge into their play situations. The students seemed to exhibit pride in themselves and in their backgrounds. Also, the parents seemed to appreciate being viewed as important sources of cultural information. It was a positive experience for the practicum writer to see the growth in language development and thinking skills as well as the growth in cultural awareness and cultural acceptance.

CHAPTER V

Recommendations

Upon completion of this practicum, the writer met with the other prekindergarten teacher and paraprofessional to share the results of the implemented program. The materials which were made or purchased for use in this practicum were made available to any teacher in the school. Information pertaining to this program including the strategies used were made available to other prekindergarten teachers in the county.

The writer continued to use the strategies, routines, and materials introduced during this program after the implementation period was completed. This writer and the other prekindergarten teacher at this practicum site plan to utilize a multicultural program based on this practicum for the 1993-1994 school year. This writer and the other prekindergarten teacher have already begun to set up the curriculum and plan to initiate the program in September. Multicultural materials, such as maps, flags, books, posters, etc.

are already being made and collected to ensure the development of a successful program.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Home Language Survey

Appendix A

Home Language Survey

1. What was the student's first language?

2. Is a language other than English spoken in the home?

   If yes, what language?

3. What language does the student speak most often in the home?

Appendix B

Brigance Preschool Screen and Informal Speech and Language Screen

Appendix B

Brigance Preschool Screen
Language School Sections

	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7
	Number of Correct Answers for Skill						
Skill 1 - Possible 4	1	3	2	2	4	1	2
Skill 2 - Possible 9	9	9	5	5	4	0	4
Skill 3 - Possible 9	9	9	6	6	9	0	9
Skill 4 - Possible 9	6	3	9	3	6	0	9
Skill 5 - Possible 9	0	0	3	3	3	0	0
Skill 6 - Possible 10	2	2	10	0	0	0	10
Skill 7 - Possible 12	10	8	2	4	8	0	2
Skill 8 - Possible 10	5	10	5	0	0	0	0
Total Correct	42/72	44/72	42/72	23/72	34/72	1/72	36/72
Average	5.25	5.50	5.25	2.88	4.25	0	4.5

Skills:

1: Personal Data Language Fluency
2: Body Parts Language Comprehension
3: Use of Objects Critical Thinking
4: Repeat Sentences Language Proficiency
5: Number Concept Language Comprehension
6: Colors Language Comprehension
7: Picture Vocabulary Language Comprehension
8: Prepositions Irregular Nouns Language Comprehension

Appendix B

Informal Speech and Language Screen

Student _____ DOB _____ School _____

Grade _____ Teacher _____ Referral Date _____

Referral Source _____ _____
Name (if other than teacher) Title

Reason for Referral

___ESE Prereferral Screening

___Request for Screening of
___ Articulation ___ Language
___ Voice ___ Fluency

___Rescreen from previous date (_____)

Additional Referral Information

_____

_____

_____

Screening Results

Date of Screening _____

Screening Method Used _____

Comments (optional) _____

_____

____ Passed Screening
No Further Testing

____ Rescreen by _____
Date

Further Testing Recommended
___ Articulation ___ Language
___ Voice ___ Fluency

❑ Check here if consultation with the psychologist is requested prior to psycho-educational testing

Screener/Speech-language Pathologist _____
(circle one) (print name)

School Contact Person _____ Phone _____

Original- After screening, place in cumulative record
Copy-After screening, return to Parent

Copy-School/ESE Folder
Copy-Referral source

W18278 (Revised 3/91)

Appendix C

Language Comprehension Pretest/Posttest

Appendix C

Language Comprehension Pretest/Posttest
Total Physical Response Checklist

Materials: 2 chairs, 1 block, 1 hula hoop

	Yes	No
1. Put the block <u>on</u> the chair.		
2. Put the block <u>under</u> the chair.		
3. Put the block <u>behind</u> the chair.		
4. Put the block <u>next to</u> the chair.		
5. Put the block <u>between</u> the chairs.		
6. Put the block <u>between</u> the chair and the hula hoop.		
7. Put the block <u>inside</u> the hula hoop.		
8. Put the block <u>outside</u> the hula hoop.		
9. Put the hula hoop <u>above</u> your head.		
10. Put the hula hoop <u>below</u> your knees.		
11. Walk <u>around</u> the hula hoop.		
12. Step <u>over</u> the hula hoop.		

Appendix D

Language Proficiency Pretest/Posttest

Appendix D

Language Proficiency Pretest/Posttest

Procedure: The teacher says the sentence once.
The student repeats the sentence.

Rating Scale: 0 = incorrect of incomplete response
1 = correct and complete response

1. The girl threw the ball. _____
2. Dogs like to chew bones. _____
3. The house is on a hill. _____
4. The funny clown made us laugh. _____
5. The little boy made a pretty picture. _____
6. My sister has a new blue car. _____
7. The brown monkey climbed up the tall tree. _____
8. The children ate pizza at the birthday party. _____

Appendix E

Language Fluency Pretest/Posttest

Appendix E

Language Fluency Pretest/Posttest

Tally (Record)

Teacher puts a check for each sentence, consisting of four or more words, that is used during a three-minute one-on-one conversation.

Students:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix F

Teacher Observation Checklist

Appendix F

Teacher Observation Checklist
Attitude Change

Teacher marks the appropriate box to indicate the student's body language and behavior during two 15-minute sharing times.

N=Never R=Rarely S=Sometimes O=Often A=Always

	N	R	S	O	A
1. Students sits up attentively.					
2. Student looks at speaker.					
3. Student speaks out.					
4. Student raises hand.					
5. Student shares story.					
6. Students speaks up in a voice loud enough to be heard.					
7. Student stands up straight.					
8. Student looks at classmates while speaking.					
9. Student speaks at moderate rate.					
10. Student stands relatively still while speaking.					

Appendix G

Critical Thinking Skills Pretest/Posttest

Appendix G

Critical Thinking Skills Pretest/Posttest

Tally

Brainstorm Timed: 1 minute each

1. Name all the animals you could find in the jungle.
   (record)

2. Name all the things you do at school.
   (record)

3. Name all the things you could do at a park.
   (record)

4. Name all the things you could do with paper.
   (record)

Appendix H

Parent Letter

Appendix H

Parent Letter

Multicultural Questionnaire

The prekindergarten students will be learning about different cultures. They will learn about the different foods, clothes, toys, games, holidays, and traditions of people from around the world. Please let us know your cultural roots so that we can include your heritage in our multicultural awareness program.

Parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters - It would be greatly appreciated if you could volunteer your time and help make this program more successful.

If you are able to share a bit of your heritage with us, it would be a great learning experience for the entire class. This could include sharing your talents, stories, recipes, pictures, costumes, etc.

Please return the bottom portion of this letter if you are able to volunteer your help.

Thank you,

Mrs. Altamura

Our cultural background is _____.

I am able to help in the following way:
(check which one/ones)

_____ spending time in class
_____ sharing stories
_____ sharing recipes
_____ cooking in class
_____ sharing a talent _____
_____ sharing articles (pictures, souvenirs, etc.)

Appendix I

Show-and-tell Letter

Appendix I

Show-and-tell Letter

Dear Parents,

Please encourage your child to bring something to school for show and tell tomorrow ( ).

Since we are learning about different cultures, we would love your child to share something from his/her cultural background.

Thank you.

Appendix J

Mid-Program Observation Checklist

Appendix J

Mid-Program Observation Checklist

Circle all numbers that apply.

Language Comprehension

1. Student follows simple directions involving prepositional words and phrases. ("Put the book on the table.")
2. Student plays simple games involving prepositional words and phrases. (Simon Says)

Language Proficiency

1. Student joins group in repeating simple songs, poems, and fingerplays.
2. Student joins group in reading along with predictable books.

Language Fluency

1. Student responds with more than one word to teacher's divergent questions.
2. Student uses more than one word when communicating with classmates.

Critical Thinking

1. Student answers questions pertaining to the feelings of storybook characters.
2. Student participates in brainstorming activities.

Appendix J

Attitude

1. Student initiates conversations with teacher and other adults in room.

2. Student initiates conversations with classmates.